DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 164 143 PS 010 359

| | |
|---|---|
| TITLE | Parents Ask...C.D.A. Answers: A Handbook with Some Answers to Questions About the CDA Assessment Process. |
| INSTITUTION | Child Development Associate Consortium, Inc., Washington, D.C. |
| SPONS AGENCY | Administration for Children, Youth, and Families (DHEW), Washington, D.C. |
| PUB DATE | Oct 78 |
| CONTRACT | HEW-105-77-1012 |
| NOTE | 27p. |
| EDRS PRICE | MF-$0.83 HC-$2.06 Plus Postage. |
| DESCRIPTORS | *Child Care Workers; Early Childhood Education; *Parent Participation; *Performance Based Teacher Education; Postsecondary Education; *Preschool Teachers; *Training |
| IDENTIFIERS | Child Development Associate |

ABSTRACT

This handbook for parents describes the Child Development Associate (CDA) assessment process. Eighteen basic questions are answered in order to provide an introduction to the process of CDA accreditation. Regional Offices of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare Administration for Children, Youth and Families are listed. The 14 CDA functional areas are defined and are organized in terms of a competency structure. Terms and acronyms are defined. CDA eligibility requirements are stated. (RH)

**********
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
**********

ED164143

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION

IS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRO-
CED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM
E PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGIN-
ING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS
ATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRE-
NT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
UCATION POSITION OR POLICY

# Parents ask . . . C.D.A. answers

PS 010359

## WHAT IS THE CDA CONSORTIUM?

The Child Development Associate Consortium (CDAC) is a private, nonprofit corporation, located in Washington, D.C. Established in 1972 as an organization of national professional associations, the Consortium is concerned with insuring the competence of staff in child development programs. With more than 30 national member associations, the Consortium assessment process gives the members of these organizations an opportunity to work together to achieve the goals of quality child care for children in all parts of the United States and overseas.

In the course of several years, the Consortium developed a system for assessing (measuring) the competence of individuals who work with young children. That system, called the Credential Award System, has been in operation since 1975. As of September, 1978, there were over 3,800 CDAs in all 50 states and Puerto Rico.

*The Child Development Associate Consortium holds registered trademarks for CDA, The Child Development Associate, and the block logo. Any unauthorized use of these trademarks for the purpose of assessment and credibility is prohibited.*

# *Parents ask . . .*
# *C.D.A. answers*

**A Handbook With**
**Some Answers To Questions About**
**The CDA Assessment**
**Process**

**We Encourage Reproduction of This Handbook**

*Appearing on front cover:*
David Harrington
Patty Sharma
Frederick Stinson

*Appearing on back cover:*
Josefina Salazar
David Blackwell

First Printing — October 1978

*This publication was funded under Contract No. HEW-105-77-1012 from the Administration for Children, Youth and Families, Office of Human Development Services, U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare.*

# THE CDA (CHILD DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATE) PROGRAM

The CDA (Child Development Associate) concept came about because the HEW Office of Child Development (now Administration for Children, Youth and Families or ACYF), wanted to improve the quality of child care.

ACYF wanted a statement of what child care staff should be able to do, and wanted a way for people to acquire and demonstrate their competency, when working with young children. ACYF wanted a credentialing system that would work, and be acceptable throughout the country. So the CDA Program was established as a national program to train, assess and credential competent classroom staff.

**CDA Training** is geared toward assisting child care staff to understand concepts embodied in the CDA competencies that encourage children's growth and learning, and for helping staff incorporate these competencies into their everyday activities with the children and their families.

**The CDA Consortium** was established in 1972 to develop and implement the process for assessing and credentialing all eligible CDA Candidates. This handbook is written to describe the role of parents in the assessment process, and to answer some questions that are frequently asked about the CDA Credential Award System.

For more information about the CDA Program, contact:

Dr. Jenni W. Klein, Director of Educational Services
Project Head Start
ACYF/DHEW, BOX 1182
Washington, D.C. 20013

**DEFINITION OF THE CDA**

***The Child Development Associate or CDA is a person able to meet the specific needs of a group of children in a child-development setting by nurturing children's physical, social, emotional and intellectual growth, by establishing and maintaining a proper child-care environment and by promoting good relations between parents and the child-development center.***

# TABLE OF CONTENTS


*Page*

The Four Local Assessment Team Members ..... 3
1. Child Development Associate (CDA) Candidate ..... 4
2. Advisor ..... 4
3. Parent-Community Representative (P-C Rep) ..... 4
4. Child Development Associate (CDA) Consortium Representative .... 6
How Parents Take Part in Assessment ..... 7
Six Competency Areas and Thirteen Functional Areas (Chart) ..... 13
Glossary of Terms ..... 14
Child Development Associate Consortium (CDAC) Member Organizations . 17

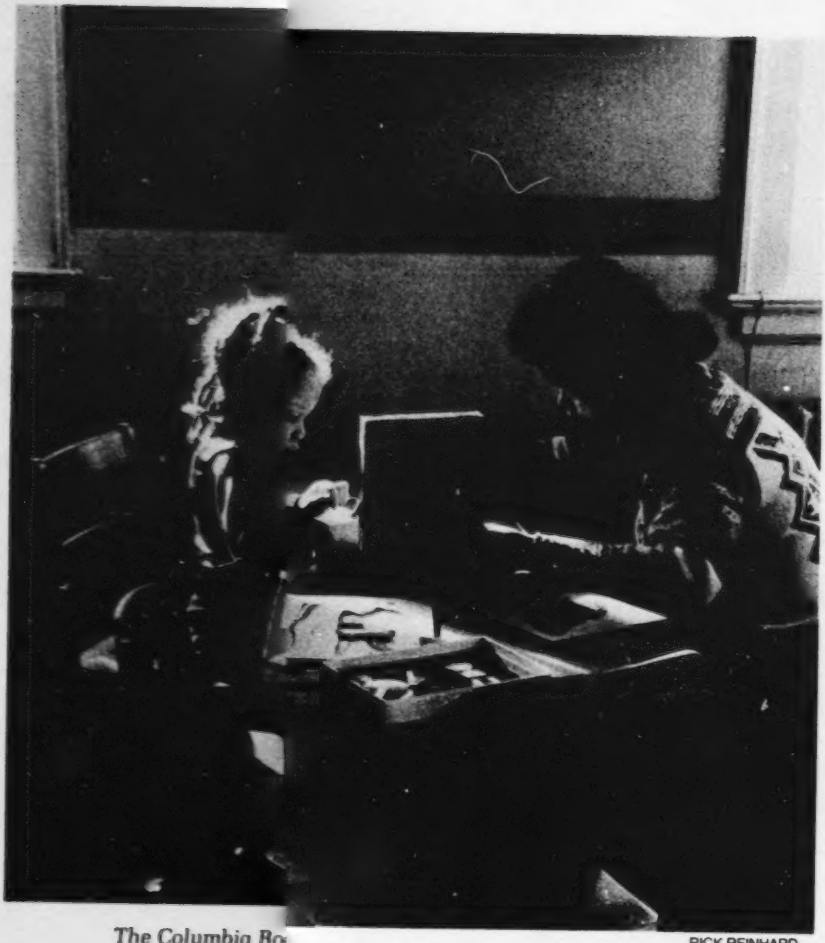
## FOREWORD & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This handbook for parents, describing the CDA assessment process, would not have been sucessfully completed without the suggestions and comments gathered from nearly 300 parents with children in more than 100 preschool programs all over the United States. The Consortium is sincerely grateful to the parents who participated in an informal field test of the handbook during the latter part of 1977 and the early months of 1978. We received comments from a good cross section of large and small programs concerned with preschool services in both rural and urban areas.*

The Consortium welcomes further comments from the readers of the first printing of this handbook. We know that the key to quality care for children at every stage of life lies with their parents. The Consortium is firmly committed to the involvement of parents in the CDA assessment process. Parents play a unique and crucial role in insuring that there is quality child care in centers and communities.

Dorothy Seiler Longaker
Field Services Specialist
CDA Consortium
July, 1978

*Programs that participated represent more than 6,000 parents with children enrolled at 278 centers in the following states: Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia and Wyoming.



RICK REINHARD

*The Columbia Ro[ad] Children's Center, D.C. pictured in photo (left to right) are[ Casey Caulk and Carmen Guinera.*

## GREETINGS TO PARENTS

Because there are some new terms in this handbook, we suggest you read over the Glossary of Terms before you start. It is found at the end of the handbook.

Some of the teachers at your child's preschool center may have already received their CDA credential, or you may have read about the CDA in the newspaper. At the center you might have heard staff members talk about "getting their CDA" or "working on their portfolio." Maybe a parent you know has served as the Parent-Community Rep on a Local Assessment Team. This booklet tries to answer some questions about the CDA (Child Development Associate) Credential, and the important and necessary part parents have to play in the local assessment of each CDA Candidate.

Cordially,

THE CDA CONSORTIUM STAFF

# ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ABOUT THE CDA ASSESSMENT AND CREDENTIALING SYSTEM

1. **What is a CDA?**
   Individuals who have been awarded the CDA Credential are called "CDAs." The Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential is a new professional award, given to any eligible person who has been successfully assessed as competent to care for young children in a preschool classroom.

2. **Who Gives Out the CDA Credential?**
   The Child Development Associate Consortium (CDAC) in Washington, D.C., awards the CDA Credential, after an assessment is satisfactorily completed by the CDA Candidate and the Local Assessment Team. (See inside front cover for a description of the Consortium.)

   Note: The CDA Consortium does not conduct CDA training. The Consortium only assesses CDA Candidates and awards the CDA credential. Participating in CDA training does not mean that a person will automatically receive a CDA credential. To do that, an individual must be assessed by the CDA Consortium.

3. **Why Should I Care about CDA?**
   The Consortium believes that you and other parents have the right and duty to know all you can about the daily activities at the center and about the staff members who work with your children.

   As a parent, you want to be sure that the people who care for your young child are capable and competent. Quality care at every preschool program has always meant that the center and classroom staff are experienced and responsible in the following ways:

   a. for your child's safety both indoors and outside.
   b. for seeing that your child is feeling well everyday s/he is at the center; by keeping in touch with you about any health matter; and by helping your child learn to carry out good health habits.
   c. for arranging the room so that your child has a variety of toys, materials and equipment from which to choose to work with, alone or with other children.
   d. for planning the kind of indoor and outdoor play activities that promote physical growth.
   e. for helping your child develop skills in thinking and solving problems, asking questions, seeking answers.
   f. for encouraging conversation, often using the child's home lan-

guage; for encouraging listening to stories and records; for encouraging your child to tell stories. Where the child speaks another language, by speaking the child's native tongue as well as English.

g. for creative activities, such as finger painting, singing, blockbuilding, clay work, moving to music, cutting and pasting, cooking.

h. for helping your child to understand the world around him or her; and that each child is a very special boy or girl, like no one else.

i. for helping your child become more independent and to learn to **express** feelings, as well as to **understand** and **control** them; for encouraging your child to try to "do it him/herself" in tasks such as setting the table, pouring the juice, putting away the blocks, finding the book for story time, tying shoes, zipping or buttoning.

j. for assisting your child in learning to get along with the other children; to settle arguments peacefully; to play alone or to take part in group activities; learning to share and "take turns."

Your child's teacher is also responsible:

k. for setting up a daily plan of both active and quiet activities, and for having simple rules that are easy for your child to understand and accept.

l. for getting to know each child's parent or guardian, and encouraging parents to become more involved in center activities and the community.

m. for a cooperative attitude toward other staff members, and taking part in staff activities.

All of the above items are "functions" that take place every day in most good preschool programs. Individuals who earn a CDA credential have shown that they are able to provide competent care for young children in these areas. The CDA assessment process is an organized way for classroom staff members to present evidence of their competence in the 13 functional areas. (See the chart on page 13).

An understanding of all that the classroom staff must do to plan the daily classroom activities helps parents get a better view of their child's center, and perhaps gain new ideas for their own use at home with their children.

**4. Who Will Assess My Child's Teacher?**

The Local Assessment Team will assess the CDA Candidate. This local team is selected by the CDA Candidate. Three (3) local people in your own community are the three of the four members of the Local Assessment Team (LAT). Local interests are maintained because community people are involved who know the program and see it operate on a daily basis.

LEE JOHNSON

*Drew Model School – Arlington, Virginia*
*Left to right: Alma Brown, parent of Montessori child and Educational Secretary; Rishi Bhatia, the CDA Consortium; Raymond O'Neill, Principal; Margie Doherty, Montessori Teacher*

The four LAT members are:

(1) **The CDA Candidate** (the person who wants to be assessed) is a member. The Candidate will choose an Advisor and a Parent-Community Rep (P-C Rep) for the team.

(2) **An Advisor,** chosen by the CDA Candidate (and who volunteers to serve on the team) is a member. The Advisor is a local person who is a professional in early childhood education or child development. The Advisor cannot be working in the same child-care classroom as the CDA Candidate.

(3) **A Parent** at the center (or a Community Representative who is a parent) chosen by the CDA Candidate (and who agrees to serve on the team) is a member. This team member is called the Parent-Community Rep or P-C Rep. The P-C Rep cannot currently have a child in the Candidate's classroom. The P-C Rep cannot be employed at the center during the assessment period.

(4) The fourth member of the Local Assessment Team is the **Consortium Representative (CDAC Rep).** The Consortium Representative is assigned to the team by the CDA Consortium in Washington, D.C.

**5. What Do the Local Assessment Team Members Do?**

Each of the four people will gather special information about the Candidate over a period of several months. Each member of the team knows what the other members are doing. There are no surprises or "secrets" in the CDA assessment process.

a. **The CDA Candidate** continues with regular classroom and center activities. S/he also collects papers, pictures, daily lesson plans and other evidence of her/his work with the children, and files them in a Portfolio. The Portfolio is divided into thirteen sections, one for each Functional Area.

   The Candidate also keeps the Center Director informed about the times that classroom visits will be made by the Advisor and the Parent-Community Rep (P-C Rep).

b. **The Advisor** member of the LAT visits the CDA Candidate's classroom several times to observe the Candidate's work with the children. The Advisor talks regularly with the Candidate about what has been observed and gives advice, counsel, and encouragement, as requested by the Candidate.

c. **The Parent-Community Representative (P-C Rep):**

   - is a parent or legal guardian of a child.
   - has been involved within the past two years as a parent or volunteer at the center where the Candidate works.
   - is not currently employed by the center where the Candidate works.
   - does not currently have a child in the Candidate's classroom.
   - is willing to observe the Candidate's performance with the children and record what s/he sees.
   - is willing to serve as a spokesperson for the parents and the community.

**The Parent-Community Representative (P-C Rep) agrees to carry out the following activities as a member of the assessment team:**

a. Visit the Candidate's room more than once and observe him/her working with the children. The P-C Rep writes down his/her observations on forms supplied by the Consortium.

b. The P-C Rep contacts every parent with a child in the Candidate's classroom and gives each of them a Parent Opinion Questionnaire to fill out (See illustration).

c. The P-C Rep is responsible for collecting the Parent Opinion Questionnaires in time for the Local Assessment Team Meeting. All of the questionnaires must be collected or accounted for.

d. The P-C Rep tallies the Parent Opinions on a green Master Parent Opinion Questionnaire.

e. The P-C Rep signs the Candidate's Readiness Form when requested by the Candidate.

f. The P-C Rep brings all the forms s/he has collected and completed to the Local Assessment Team Meeting, where the four Team members review all the assessment materials they have each collected.

g. The P-C Rep attends and actively takes part in the Local Assessment Team (LAT) Meeting.

h. The P-C Rep has an equal voice and vote in every decision made at the LAT Meeting.

**6. Who Is the Fourth Member of the Local Assessment Team?**

- **The CDA Consortium Representative** (CDAC Rep) is the 4th member of the team.
- When the CDA Candidate, the Advisor and the Parent-Community Rep have completed their tasks and all three agree that the Candidate is ready for final assessment, the CDA Candidate tells the Consortium. The Candidate mails a Readiness Form which the other two members have signed to the Consortium.
- The CDA Consortium staff assigns a CDA Consortium Rep, who arranges to come to the center to observe the Candidate and to take part in the Local Assessment Team Meeting. The Consortium Rep in most cases lives in the same area as the CDA candidate, often in the same state or community.
- The CDAC Rep is a professional in early childhood who has been carefully chosen and trained by the CDA Consortium. S/he has been trained to observe, interview and be fair in making judgments about the CDA Candidate's performance. S/he has also had at least two years of experience working with young children in a classroom setting.

**7. What Happens at the Local Assessment Team (LAT) Meeting?**

- All information is shared at the LAT Meeting. Each Team member has an equal voice and an equal vote. Team members review all the information that has been collected by each member.
- The purpose of the Local Assessment Team Meeting is to review all the assessment materials, including the Candidate's Portfolio. The four team members sit down together for several hours and discuss their observations of the Candidate, including the Candidate's explanation of his/her own behavior and teaching methods.

# The Child Development Associate Consortium
## Local Assessment Team

Name of Candidate _____

Center _____

Date _____

PARENT OPINION QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Have you ever met the Candidate? Yes ___ No ___
2. If you have met the Candidate, how well would you say you know her/him?
   Very well ___ Not too well ___ Not at all ___
3. How long has the Candidate worked with your child?
   Less than 6 months ___ 6 months to 1 year ___ 1 to 2 years ___ Longer ___ Don't know ___
4. Do you think your child is happy in the Candidate's group? Yes ___ No ___
   Please explain: _____
5. Does your child talk about the Candidate? Yes ___ No ___
6. Are her/his comments about the Candidate: Favorable ___ Unfavorable ___
7. As a parent, are you happy that your child is in the Candidate's room? Yes ___ No ___
   Please give a reason for your answer: _____
8. What do you especially like about the way the Candidate treats your child? _____
9. Is there anything that you would like to see changed in her/his treatment of your child? Yes ___ No ___
   If yes, please tell what that is: _____
10. Have you changed your way of treating your child, in any way, because of what the Candidate does? Yes ___ No ___
    If yes, please describe how you've changed: _____
11. Has the Candidate invited you to visit your child's room? Yes ___ No ___
12. Have you ever visited your child's room while the Candidate was working with the group? Yes ___ No ___
13. How often have you seen the Candidate working with the children in your child's group?
    Many times ___ A few times ___ Once or twice ___ Not at all ___
14. Have you seen the Candidate doing or saying anything that would help your child feel good about his ethnic group and culture (race, language, community, etc.)? Yes ___ No ___
    Please describe: _____

(Sample of Parent Opinion Questionnaire)

- The LAT members discuss the Candidate's performance in each of the thirteen Functional Areas. All four members agree that the CDA Candidate is either "competent" or "needs further training," in each Functional Area.
- For the CDA Credential to be awarded, the final vote of the Local Assessment Team must be unanimous (4 to 0) that the Candidate is competent.
- After a team decision about the Candidate's competence has been reached, the Consortium in Washington is officially notified by the Consortium Rep member of the team.

The Child Development Associate Consortium.

Having been assessed according to the standards approved by The Child Development Associate Consortium and having satisfactorily demonstrated competence in working with children three through five years old is hereby recognized as a

Child Development Associate.

*The CDA Credential (see example above) is mailed from the Consortium to those CDA Candidates who have been declared "competent" by their Local Assessment Teams.*

8. **How Can I Take Part in a CDA Assessment at My Child's Center?**
There are several ways that parents and legal guardians can take part. When YOU are approached, it will be an advantage to you and your family to take an active role.
    - When you learn that your child's teacher is being assessed, be sure to cooperate with the Parent-Community Rep on the Local Assessment Team. The P-C Rep will explain what to do. Your cooperation is very important to the CDA Candidate.
    - Tell the Center Director if you would be willing to serve on a Local Assessment Team as the P-C Rep. Then when a CDA as-

sessment is scheduled, your name will be available for possible selection by the Candidate. Before you agree to serve on a Local Assessment Team, ask the CDA Candidate to clearly explain what is expected of you and the other parents.

- Talk to parents who have already served on Local Assessment Teams. They will be able to share their thoughts about this exciting new experience in parent involvement.
- Some centers hold special parent meetings and Policy Council meetings just to discuss the CDA assessment and what parents can do. You might suggest having this kind of meeting at your center. The Consortium will be glad to send printed materials for the meeting. For example, this handbook could be used at the meeting.

**9. Does the CDA Candidate Pay to be Assessed?**

The total amount paid to the Consortium for each assessment is $20.00. Five dollars is for the Application Fee and $15.00 is for the Assessment Fee.

Some centers pay the CDA assessment fees, and some training programs pay for the Candidate's assessment; in other cases, the individual Candidate pays the fee. This is a matter between the CDA Candidate and his/her employer.

**10. Is the Parent-Community Representative (P-C Rep) Reimbursed for Expenses?**

Yes. For participating on a Local Assessment Team, the P-C Rep is reimbursed $15.00 by the Consortium. This amount is not a fee, but is to cover incidental expenses such as postage, phone calls, or gas mileage. Only the P-C Rep on the LAT is reimbursed, not the other parents.

**11. What About Parents Who Hesitate to Get Involved?**

- Remember, your child is enrolled in the program so it is your program, too. The involvement of parents is a vital part of the assessment of a teacher's ability to work well with young children. The CDA assessment process is hard work for the CDA Candidate, and cannot be done without cooperation from parents.

  Since the assessment is a team effort, the LAT members help each other and the other parents all along the way to understand what is going on at each step.
- The CDA Candidate will talk with the P-C Rep about what must be done during the assessment and answer any questions that other parents may have. The Consortium will send the P-C Rep all the papers that are needed for the assessment. If parents are

Spanish-speaking, the Consortium will send papers in Spanish, if so requested by an eligible candidate.

- Before or during the assessment process, if there are questions that puzzle you, feel free to call the Consortium on the toll free number (800-424-5110). Someone there will be glad to talk with you.

**12. Why Are People Interested in Becoming CDAs?**

- Because CDAs are part of a group of professional child care staff working for quality care for young children. Competent care equals quality care, and CDAs have demonstrated their competence through the assessment process.
- The most exciting answers to this question come from the 3800 CDAs themselves. Just ask one! They are the best people to speak about the growth and development that occurred for them during the assessment process, as well as for the children in their care.

**13. Can Parents Become CDAs?**

Yes, they can, if they can meet the four CDA eligibility requirements and are assessed as competent. The four eligibility requirements are listed on page 15 of this handbook. More and more parents and other classroom volunteers have shown an interest in earning the CDA credential, and some have successfully done so.

**14. Which States Recognize the CDA?**

As of September 1978, the following states have incorporated the CDA credential into their state licensing regulations as an option for preschool staff qualifications:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Washington | Texas | North Carolina |
| North Dakota | Virginia | New Mexico |
| Minnesota | Utah | Nevada |
| Kansas | Illinois | South Carolina |
| Maryland | South Dakota | |

**15. How Can We Find Out Who Are CDAs in Our State?**

The CDA Consortium keeps an updated listing or roster of all active CDAs, by state. Write to the Office of Candidate Services at the CDA Consortium if you would like more information about CDAs in your area.

**16. Does the Consortium Conduct CDA Training?**

- No. The Consortium does not conduct any kind of CDA training. The Consortium only conducts the assessment and awards the CDA credential to successfully assessed CDA Candidates.
- Each CDA Candidate must have either some formal or informal training, however, to be eligible for assessment. The Consortium does not specify what kind. That is up to the CDA Candidate and his/her employer. (See Eligibility Requirements on page 15.)

**17. How Do People Get Training to be CDAs?**

- CDA training can occur in a variety of ways and at a variety of places, including:

| | |
|---|---|
| —junior colleges | —vocational schools |
| —community colleges | —technical schools |
| —universities | —high schools |

  You might want to contact your local educational programs to find out if they offer CDA training.
- Many CDAs have had informal training experiences, such as on-the-job training, workshops, or staff in-service and pre-service training that help prepare them for their competency-based assessment.
- The largest group of people being trained to become CDAs is the more than 6,000 staff members employed in Head Start programs all over the United States and its territories. They are enrolled in Head Start Supplementary Training/Child Development Associate Training programs (HSST/CDA).

  For more information about HSST/CDA training, contact: Dr. Jenni W. Klein, Director of Educational Services, Project Head Start, ACYF/DHEW, Box 1182, Washington, D.C. 20013.

**18. How Can I Find Out About CDA Training in My State?**

Write to your Regional Office of HEW/ACYF (Project Head Start) at the addresses listed on the next page.

# REGIONAL OFFICES - HEW/ACYF

REGION I
Mr. John Thomas
Child Development Specialist
John F. Kennedy Building
Government Center
Boston, Massachusetts 02203
(617) 223-6450

REGION II
Ms. Glen Winters
Child Development Specialist
Federal Bulding
26 Federal Plaza
New York, New York 10007
(212) 264-4123

REGION III
Mr. Bob Schaffer
Child Development Specialist
P.O. Box 13716
3521 Market Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19101
(215) 596-6762 or 6757

REGION IV
Mr. James (Pat) Doyle
Child Development Specialist
101 Marietta #905
Atlanta, Georgia 30323
(404) 221-2298

REGION V
Mr. German White
Child Development Specialist
300 South Wacker Drive
29th Floor
Chicago, Illinois 60606
(312) 353-1784

REGION VI
Ms. Margaret Emswiler
Child Development Specialist
Fidelity Union Tower - Room 2525
1507 Pacific Avenue
Dallas, Texas 75201
(214) 749-2491

REGION VII
Ms. Pearl Draine
Child Development Specialist
Federal Office Bldg.
601 East 12th Street
Kansas City, Missouri 64106
(816) 758-5401

REGION VIII
Mr. Juan Cordova
Parent Involvement Specialist
19th and Stout Streets
Denver, Colorado 80202
(303) 327-3972

REGION IX
Ms. Louise Gilbert
Ms. Mary Lewis
Child Development Specialist
Federal Office Building
50 Fulton Street, Room 102
San Francisco, California 94102
(415) 556-0403

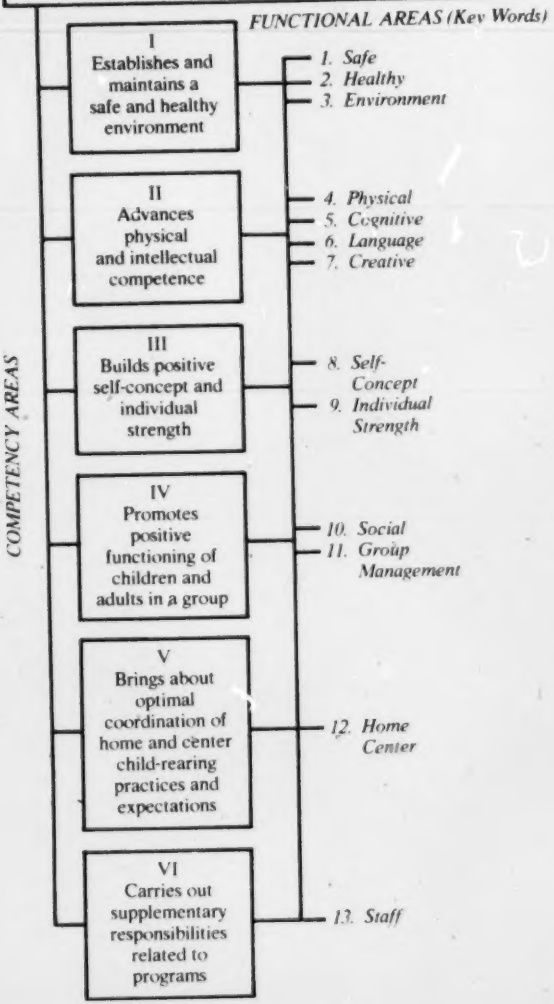
REGION X
Mr. Frank Jones
Child Development Specialist
Mail Stop 620, Arcade Plaza Bldg.
1321 Second Avenue
Seattle, Washington 98101
(206) 399-0838
(206) 442-0482

Indian & Migrant Program Division
Ms. Pecita Lonewolf
Child Development Specialist
P.O. Box 1182
Washington, D.C. 20013
(202) 755-7700

## THE CONSORTIUM'S COMPETENCY STRUCTURE

### OFFICIAL DEFINITION OF THE CDA

The Child Development Associate or CDA is a person able to meet the specific needs of a group of children in a child-development setting by nurturing children's physical, social, emotional and intellectual growth, by establishing and maintaining a proper child-care environment and by promoting good relations between parents and the child-development center.


COMPETENCY AREAS
FUNCTIONAL AREAS (Key Words)
I Establishes and maintains a safe and healthy environment
1. Safe
2. Healthy
3. Environment
II Advances physical and intellectual competence
4. Physical
5. Cognitive
6. Language
7. Creative
III Builds positive self-concept and individual strength
8. Self-Concept
9. Individual Strength
IV Promotes positive functioning of children and adults in a group
10. Social
11. Group Management
V Brings about optimal coordination of home and center child-rearing practices and expectations
12. Home Center
VI Carries out supplementary responsibilities related to programs
13. Staff

## DE
## THIRTEEN FUNCTIONAL AREAS

1. **SAFE:** Candidate provides a safe environment by taking necessary measures to reduce or prevent accidents.
2. **HEALTHY:** Candidate provides an environment that is free of factors which may contribute to or cause illness.
3. **LEARNING ENVIRONMENT:** Candidate selects materials and equipment and arranges the room to provide an environment conducive to learning and appropriate to the developmental level and learning style of the children.
4. **PHYSICAL:** Candidate provides a variety of appropriate equipment, activities, and opportunities to promote the physical development of the children.
5. **COGNITIVE:** Candidate provides activities and experiences which encourage questioning, probing, and problem-solving skills appropriate to the developmental level and learning style of the child.
6. **LANGUAGE:** Candidate helps children acquire and use language as a means of communicating their thoughts and feelings and of understanding others.
7. **CREATIVE:** Candidate provides a variety of appropriate experiences and materials and media that stimulate children to explore and express their creative abilities.
8. **SELF-CONCEPT:** Candidate helps each child to know, accept and appreciate her/himself as an individual.
9. **INDIVIDUAL STRENGTH:** Candidate helps each child develop a sense of independence and acquire the ability to express, understand, and control feelings relative to her/his cultural ethnic group.
10. **SOCIAL:** Candidate helps the children learn to get along with others and encourages feelings of mutual respect among the children in the group.
11. **GROUP MANAGEMENT:** Candidate provides the group with a positive routine and simple rules with the group that are understood and accepted by children and adults.
12. **HOME/CENTER:** Candidate establishes positive and productive relationships with parents and encourages them to participate in the center's activities.
13. **STAFF:** Candidate works cooperatively with other staff members where the center's plans, activities, policies, and rules are concerned.

# GLOSSARY OF TERMS

| Word or Term | Meaning |
|---|---|
| CDA (Child Development Associate) | A person who has received the CDA credential after being assessed as competent. |
| CDAC, or Consortium | Child Development Associate Consortium — an association or a group of individuals or organizations. The CDA Consortium member organizations are concerned with the education, development and welfare of children. |
| Competent, Competency Areas | Skill or ability to do something well. The six general areas of observable skills in which the CDA Candidate is assessed (see chart on page 12 for the six competency areas.) |
| Functional Areas (13) | The 13 Functional Areas are specific kinds of tasks and activities a CDA Candidate demonstrates which are the core of the CDA Assessment system. (For a definition of each Functional Area, see page 13). |
| Local Assessment Team (LAT) | Four people: the Candidate, Parent-Community Representative, the Advisor and the CDAC Representative are on the Local Assessment Team and conduct the assessment. |
| CDA Candidate | A person who wants to earn a CDA credential by being assessed. |
| Parent-Community Representative (P-C Rep) | The parent member of the Local Assessment Team. |
| Advisor | The Advisor member of the Local Assessment Team who observes and advises the Candidate during the assessment period. The Advisor may be the Candidate's course instructor, trainer, supervisor, or Center Director. (Formerly called Trainer. Change made 10/1/78). |
| Consortium Representative (CDAC Rep) | A member of the Local Assessment Team, assigned by the Consortium, who is a professional in the field of early childhood education/child development. |

| | |
|---|---|
| | S/he has had at least 2 years of experience working directly with 3 through 5 year-old children; college training in early childhood education/child development; and has been trained extensively by the CDA Consortium for the role of CDAC Rep. |
| Portfolio | The CDA Candidate's individualized collection of material divided into 13 sections which is presented to the Local Assessment Team (LAT) at the final meeting. |
| Credential | An official, written award or document showing successful completion of an activity, signed by the proper authorities. The CDA credential is signed by the Executive Director of the Consortium and the Chairman of the Board of Directors. |

## THE ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS TO APPLY TO BE A CDA

YOU MUST BE ABLE TO ANSWER "YES" TO THE FOUR FOLLOWING REQUIREMENTS IN ORDER TO APPLY FOR ASSESSMENT.

| | Yes |
|---|---|
| 1. **Age** - You are 16 years old or older. | ☐ |
| 2. **Access to Center** - You have access to an approved child-development center, where you can be observed by an assessment team, working with a group of children 3 through 5 years old. | ☐ |
| 3. **Training** - You have had some formal OR informal training in early childhood education/child development. | ☐ |
| 4. **Experience** - You have had, within the last 5 years, at least 8 months of full-time experience OR 16 months of part-time or volunteer experience working with children 3 through 5 years old in a group setting. | ☐ |

HOW TO GET MORE INFORMATION:

CDA Consortium
805 Fifteenth St., N.W.
Suite 500
Washington, D.C., 20005
Phone: (202) 347-8474

## CONSORTIUM MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

Action for Children's Television

American Alliance for Health, Physical Education and Recreation

The American Dietetic Association

American Montessori Society

American Occupational Therapy Association

American Optometric Association

American Personnel and Guidance Association

American Psychological Association

American Speech and Hearing Association

Association for Childhood Education International

Association for Library Service to Children *(a division of the American Library Association)*

Association of Teacher Educators

Black Child Development Institute

Center for Applied Linguistics

Children's Defense Fund *(of the Washington Research Project)*

Children's Theatre Association of America *(Division of American Theatre Association)*

Day Care & Child Development Council of America, Inc.

National Art Education Association

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education

National Association for the Education of Young Children

National Association for Retarded Citizens

National Association of Social Workers

National Association of State Directors of Child Development

National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification

National Congress of Parents and Teachers

National Federation of Settlements and Neighborhood Centers

National Indian Education Association

National Parents Federation for Day Care and Child Development

National Urban League, Inc.

Puerto Rican Association for Community Affairs, Inc.